

Southeast Fisheries Science Center
Miami Laboratory
75 Virginia Beach Drive
Miami, FL 33149

January 29, 2007

TO: Sheryan Epperly,
Protected Resources Branch

FROM: Larry Beerkircher,
POP Observer Coordinator

SUBJECT: Longline gear Incidental Take summary for quarter 4, 2006 (Revised).

The Miami Laboratory Pelagic Observer Program (POP) is providing you with a summary report of the incidental take of marine mammals, turtles, and birds that have been recorded by observers aboard longline vessels for October 1 to December 31, 2006. The POP completed an overall coverage rate of 10.4% of the selected pelagic longline fleet for this quarter (Table 1). During the quarter, observers recorded 24 sea turtles (13-leatherbacks-alive; 1-leatherback-dead; 10-loggerheads-alive), in addition to ten (10) marine mammals (6-pilot whales-alive; 1 pilot whale-dead; 1-marine mammal-dead; 1-dolphin-alive; 1-dolphin-condition unknown) and 3 seabirds (1-shearwater-alive; 2-greater shearwater-dead).

Attached for you are the original Sea Turtle Life History (STLH) forms submitted by observers during the regular longline coverage, along with copies of the associated haul logs. The photographs of the sea turtles, and any associated biopsy samples, will be provided with this document. The POP will maintain copies of the STLH forms in our files until you or Lesley Stokes have completed your data review or entry. I recommend that the original STLH forms be returned to the POP staff or the file cabinets in Rm 324 when the reviews have been completed.

In closing, in addition to the POP reporting of Protected Resource (PR) species recorded during observed longline fishing, observers have been requested to inspect the turtle handling and dehooking gear available aboard the vessels as a requirement of the 2004 Biological Opinion (BO). As a requirement of the BO tasking for the Miami Laboratory, I am providing you, as well as Lance Garrison, with copies of the Miami PR Turtle Gear check list form filled out by the observer from quarter 4. A PDF file will be created and will be posted on the SEFSC-POP secured website. Although it is not clear how this information will be processed, the originals will remain on file in the observer office, room 314. Analyses associated with Turtle Take Estimates (TTE) nor the Net Mortality Ratio (NMR) mentioned in the 2004 BO are not provided, as the POP staffing does not have the expertise to provide these results.

Attachments

Table of the Incidental Take summary for fourth quarter of 2006 by geographical area and effort (sets and hook count) observed; Original STLF forms (previously provided) and associated turtle photographs and biopsy samples for regular longline coverage; and photocopies of the Turtle Gear check list forms.

cc: POP office files;
Guy Davenport, Jim Bohnsack (cover letters only).

Table 1: Percent coverage (by sets), the incidental take of Protected Resource species (turtles, mammals, seabirds), and hook effort summarized by geographical area for October 1 to December 31, 2006 (A=Alive, D=Dead, U= Unknown, LB=Leatherback, LH=Loggerhead, O=other)

AREA	TOTAL SETS OBSERVED	REQUIRED 8% COVERAGE	TURTLES		MAMMALS			BIRDS	
			A LB/LH/O	D	A	D	U	A	D
GOM-2	63(12%)	42	2/ 0/0	1	0	0	0	0	0
FEC-3	0(0%)	4	0/ 0/0	0	0	0	0	0	0
SAB-4	0(0%)	6	0/ 0/0	0	0	0	0	0	0
MAB-5	30(7%)	33	2/ 1/0	0	7	2	1	0	1
NEC-6	8(10+%)	6	1/0/0	0	0	0	0	1	0
NED-7	33(85%)	3	8/9/0	0	0	0	0	0	1
OTH	0(0%)	7	0/ 0/0	0	0	0	0	0	0
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TOTAL	134(10+%)	101	13/10/0	1	7	2	1	1	2

Hook effort Summary:

<u>Area</u>	<u>Hook effort</u>
GOM	49,274
MAB	25,447
NEC	7,440
NED	27,424
TOTAL	109,585